

## *Preface*

*From Broadside to Broadband* is the first new collection of Scottish bagpipe music to be published exclusively on CD-Rom and it appears at an historic moment: the eve of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of printing and publishing in Scotland. Patents were granted by James IV in 1507 to Edinburgh burgesses Walter Chepman and Androw Myllar to establish a printing press “for our plesour, the honour and profit of our Realme and leigis”. From this a vigorous popular publishing market grew up dominated during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries by the single sheet broadside and the chapbook (a broadside sheet folded to form a booklet of 8 or so pages) sold in towns, villages and fairs throughout Scotland by the travelling pedlars whose representative figure was “Johnny Cheap the Chapman”.

The title reflects the enterprise of Scottish traditional musicians through the centuries in using every method available to preserve and transmit the music. The earliest tunes in this collection would have been familiar to the broadside sellers of the later 1600's, while one of the only three of my own compositions to have been previously published appeared first on the website of *Piper & Drummer Online* in the summer of 2005. Scotland's traditional musicians, far from being resistant to change (though this is a common stereotype), have always taken advantage of the latest technology. Donald MacDonald pioneered the modern style of printing pipe music and published some of this at great personal cost, while the musical shorthand devised by composer and music editor Charles Simeon Thomason for his great *Ceol Mor* edition was reproduced using new photo-zincography techniques. With the rapid fall in the cost of printing after 1855 pipers were in the forefront of the cheap music movement with the editions of *Uilleam* Ross, Donald MacPhee and David Glen. These in turn led the way for the great 20<sup>th</sup> century light music collections of Willie Ross and Donald MacLeod. In the 1970s the new photocopying technology was used by the reprint firm EP to issue at very affordable prices some of the great piping collections which had long been unobtainable. In the present century Ceol Sean of Springfield Illinois have restored and extended access to the repertoire by publishing classic bagpipe music books on CD. It is very much in keeping with piping tradition to have the present collection issued by Ceol Sean. The electronic format is new, but the aim is centuries old: to place the music, as C. S. Thomason said, “within reach of poor pipers, surely a matter of the first importance”.

The links between the various branches of our musical tradition have always been strong. The leading pipe composer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, G. S. McLennan, was a friend of the fiddle virtuoso Scott Skinner (who himself composed many tunes for the pipes) and played at the latter's funeral. Skinner's precious Guarnerius fiddle, carried open in its case upon his coffin, had been given to him fifty years earlier when he was an impecunious dancing master in Aberlour by William Grant of Elchies, uncle of C. S. Thomason. Alongside Skinner's obituary in the *Oban Times* in March 1927 was an account of the famous piper John MacDonald of Inverness making the earliest commercial piobaireachd recordings. John MacDonald was also a fiddle player. Within six years Jimmy Shand was to cut his first recordings on the button-key accordion with Regal-Zonophone in London. Jimmy Shand also played the fiddle and composed pipe tunes, such as *Master David Anderson Shand* and *Kirkwall Bay*. When the Bucksburn and District pipe band was forming in the later 1940s a series of

fundraising events was held in the Music Hall of Aberdeen and famous country dance bands gave their support, including Jimmy Shand, Curly MacKay and Bobby MacLeod.

All these form part of a richly integrated song and instrumental tradition. Some of the tunes in this collection started off in the piping repertoire, migrated into the fiddle and dance band repertoire, then came back again, or the other way round. I have sat on a quiet night in a country pub and listened to an accordion player pour out pipe tune after pipe tune, varied, rich, and beautifully expressed, albeit in a different medium. If a good tune is not nailed down then somebody somewhere is going to play it, regardless of instrument, right across Scotland and indeed throughout the world.

It is in that spirit that this collection has been assembled.

William Donaldson, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2006